

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5479

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 31998

E.O.: 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, FR, UR

SUBJ: GALLEY VISIT TO SVIET UNION

1. SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO FRENCH, VISIT TO SOVIET UNION BY FRENCH MINISTER OF THE ARMED FORCES WAS FORMAL AND UNEVENTFUL. LIMITED FRENCH-USSR MILITARY EXCHANGES WILL CONTINUE. END SUMMARY.

2. SEILLIERE, DIPLOMATIC ADVISER TO FRENCH MINISTER OF ARMED FORCES GALLEY, DEBRIEFED US ON THEIR OFFICIAL VISIT TO MOSCOW DECEMBER 3-11. HE SAID GENERAL ATMOSPHERE OF VISIT WAS FORMAL AND "VERY CORRECT", AND LACKED SENSE OF SPONTANEITY AND INFORMALITY OF GALLEY'S SEPTEMBER TRIP TO U.S. SOVIETS URGED THAT FRENCH SHOULD MAINTAIN THEIR POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE, ALTHOUGH THEY DID NOT MAKE A POINT OF PURSUING RECENT SOVIET CRITICISM OF FRENCH EFFORTS IN AREA OF EUROPEAN DEFENSE. AS A RESULT, SEILLIERE BELIEVES THAT SOVIETS WILL HALT THEIR RECENT WAVE OF PRESS ATTACKS ON FRANCE'S INITIATIVES REGARDING EUROPEAN DEFENSE. THESE ATTACKS WOULD DOUBTLESS BE RENEWED, HE ADDED, IF COPENHAGEN SUMMIT SERIOUSLY ADDRESSED DEFENSE PROBLEMS (WHICH SEILLIERE THINKS UNLIKELY), OR IF FRENCH POLITICAL LEADERSHIP WERE TO RENEW SUGGESTIONS TOWARD ORGANIZING EUROPEAN DEFENSE.

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3. ACCORDING TO SEILLIERE, THERE WERE NO SUBSTANTIVE AGREEMENTS REACHED BETWEEN GALLEY AND SOVIETS. INDEED, GALLEY UNDERLINED TO SOVIETS (AND TO FRENCH PRESS) THAT VISIT WOULD LEAD TO CONTINUED "EXCHANGES" (FOR EXAMPLE, VISITS BY FRENCH AND SOVIET MILITARY LEADERS TO EACH COUNTRY) RATHER THAN "COOPERATION." THIS WOULD NOT EXCLUDE, HOWEVER, LIMITED TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN LIMITED AND NON-SENSITIVE FIELDS, SUCH AS USE BY SOVIETS OF FRENCH LASER SYSTEM IN ONE OF THEIR MOON SHOTS DESIGNED TO MEASURE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE EARTH AND THE MOON. MOREOVER, ADDED SEILLIERE, THERE WAS LONG DISCUSSION ON TECHNICAL PROBLEMS EACH COUNTRY HAS ENCOUNTERED IN SST PROGRAMS. IN THIS REGARD, SOVIETS SAID THAT PRODUCTION COPIES OF TU-144 WOULD UNDERGO CERTIFICATION TESTS NEXT YEAR.

4. SEILLIERE HAD TWO OBSERVATIONS ABOUT TRIP. FIRST, SOVIETS SOUGHT TO DEMONSTRATE HOW IMPORTANT THEY REGARD FRANCE BY GIVING GALLEY FIRST CLASS RECEPTION, E.G., PRESIDENT PODGORNYY RECEIVED GALLEY AND ENTIRE MILITARY Hierarchy INCLUDING MARSHAL GRECHKO MUSTERED FOR RECEPTION AT FRENCH EMBASSY. SECOND, WHILE SOVIETS DID NOT SEEM TO HAVE ANY PARTICULAR CONCERN ABOUT SECURITY THREAT TO USSR FROM WESTERN EUROPE (EXCLUDING FRG), THEY CONTINUE TO HAVE PREOCCUPATION BORDERING ON PARANOIA ABOUT RESURGENT GERMANY. SEILLIERE SAID THAT 1941-45 EXPERIENCE HAD ETCHED INDELIBLE SCARS ON RUSSIAN PEOPLE AND COUNTRYSIDE.

5. COMMENT: GALLEY VISIT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN ROUTINE PROTOCOL EXERCISE, RETURNING EARLIER VISIT TO FRANCE BY SOVIET MOD. IT KEEPS GOF LINES OPEN TO MOSCOW AND IT DEMONSTRATES THEIR CONTINUED INDEPENDENCE BY CAREFULLY BALANCING OFFICIAL VISITS TO USSR AND U.S. WE TEND TO ACCEPT SEILLIERE'S ASSURANCES THAT SEILLIERE MAY HAVE OVERSTATED RESTRAINT OF SOVIETS REGARDING CRITICISM OF FRENCH EFFORTS TOWARD EUROPEAN DEFENSE. VISIT DID NOT BREAK NEW GROUND SUBSTANTIVELY.

(PARA 4, MOSCOW 15571).

GDS

IRWIN

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